

# The Ohio Democrat

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### NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION. TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

**Fellow-Citizens:**—The Convention of delegates representing the Democracy of the United States, having unanimously resolved to recommend the present Chief Magistrate as a candidate for re-election, deem it proper and respectful to the people, clearly and distinctly to state the principles on which the Administration of the Government, under his direction, has been conducted, and the manner in which they have been maintained, as furnishing the clearest evidence of what will be his future course, if sustained by the suffrages of those who believe them the only sure foundation of their freedom, prosperity, and happiness.

These principles have never changed, and can never change. They are coeval with the democratic party. They constitute its existence and identity; & no citizen, however eminent or illustrious, should be considered worthy of its support, whose invariable attachment has not been manifested by a life of devotion through every vicissitude of hope and discouragement, victory and defeat. To this test every candidate for support of the Democracy should be brought, and by this he should be judged.

#### THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

The most weighty and prominent of these great fundamental principles are: That the will of the people is the only legitimate source of power. That all power thus derived, is a trust to be exercised only for the public good. That agents so entrusted with its exercise are responsible to the people for the faithful performance of their duties. That this responsibility should be as direct and immediate as possible. That the due execution of this trust can only be secured by a general diffusion of the right of suffrage, through the medium of which alone the people can retain a proper control over their agents, and by its free exercise, unawed by power, uninfluenced by corruption, by a sacred regard of the representative to the instructions of his constituents, and a strict construction of the Constitution, which, while it secures the right of the majority, equally defends and protects those of the minority; and by confirming on all occasions to the principles laid down in Madison's Report the Alien & Sedition laws—principles which constitute the only safeguards of personal liberty, the only bulwarks of the citadel of freedom.

#### DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES.

In our foreign intercourse, it has ever been the policy of the Democratic party to deal justly and liberally with all, to form political alliances with none, to watch with sleepless vigilance over the national rights and honor, cherishing at the same time, and acting on the conviction, that they can in no way be so effectually guarded as by invariably doing justice to others, and as invariably demanding it for ourselves, always preferring the decision of controversies by reason and temperate discussion, and never to shrink from an appeal to the last resort of nations, when it becomes indispensable by the fault of our adversary.

The Democratic party has always cherished the maxim and acted upon the principle, that no more money shall be collected from the people than is strictly required by the wants of the Government, and a restriction of these to a simple, economical administration of its affairs, the only policy consistent with the purity of our Republican system.

The Democratic party has always, from first to last, arrayed itself in stern and inflexible opposition to a national debt, incurred for any other purpose than the immediate defence of the honor and interest of the country, as furnishing the ready means for extravagant prodigality forming the basis of a great credit system, and imposing burdens on posterity, as a penalty for the profligacy of their ancestors. In opposition, "unqualified and uncompromising," to the establishment of a National Bank, as alike unconstitutional, inexpedient, and dangerous to public liberty; and as the antagonist of this gigantic instrument of corruption, whose power to confer benefits bears no proportion to its means of inflicting injuries, it advocates a separation of the fiscal concerns of Government from the fluctuations of the banking system, as equally indispensable to the independence of the Government, the safety of the public funds, and the maintenance of a sound and stable currency.

The Democratic party is in favor of a faithful adherence to the principles adopted and carried into successful operation by the illustrious Jackson, in regard to unconstitutional objects of internal improvement by the instrumentality of the General Government.

The Democratic party has, through all the vicissitudes of alternate victory and defeat, of depression and exaltation, cherished a deep, abiding, and undying

attachment to our glorious Union. It has, on all occasions, exhibited a determination to maintain with inviolable faith those great compromises of interests on which it is founded, and by a stern adherence to which the proud edifice can alone withstand those influences which have heretofore proved fatal to confederated States.

#### MR. VAN BUREN'S ADHERENCE TO THE DEMOCRATIC CREED.

Such are the great fundamental principles which constitute the political creed of the democratic party. Has the eminent citizen we now present a sacred time for the suffrages of the people, faithfully adhered to them in his political career, and in his past administration of the Government? Has he fulfilled the anticipations of his supporters, and redeemed the sanctity of his pledges? The most conclusive reply to these questions, is a reference to the course of his administration.

In the midst of all the clamors and calumnies of the last three years, an opposition, more violent, inquisitive, and indefatigable than any faction, or combination of factions, to which avarice ambition ever gave birth, has never been able to fasten upon him a solitary act, or a single sentiment incompatible with his previous declaration or in violation of the principles of the Democratic party, by which he was elected. So close has been his adherence to the doctrines of its great expounder, the venerated Jefferson, and so invariably has he carried them out in practice, that every act of his Administration has only added new virulence, to the attacks of that party whose opposition has always been most bitter when those doctrines were most decisively carried out in practice.

We appeal to the messages of Mr. Van Buren as undeniable proofs of his devotion to these principles and to the acts of his Administration as furnishing demonstration of the sincerity with which he avowed them. We appeal to the daily and hourly aggravation of the opposition he has encountered from that party which has always been opposed to those principles, as the clearest testimony of his having manfully and fearlessly taken the old Republican track under circumstances the most discouraging and embarrassing, and pursued it with an intrepid perseverance, through sunshine and through storm, though sometimes appearing to stand almost alone and unsupported, except by the consciousness of the truth and righteousness of his cause, and the unshaken fidelity of his devotion.

If the policy of the Democratic party is not yet consummated, it has not been owing to any want of effort on his part, but to the pecuniary opposition of a combination of factions, having no one interest or principle in common, but a hatred of the Democracy, and a hankering for the restoration of that ascendancy which they lost by abuse and perversion. If other evidences were required to prove that he had struck the true chord of Democracy, it is abundantly to be found in the character and material of the opposition which his administration has called forth, and which is identified in its sources, its means, and its ends, with that which assailed Mr. Jefferson throughout his illustrious career, which pursued Gen. Jackson in public life, and still violates the sanctity of his retirement with unmitigated reproaches & unrelenting persecution. A brief summary of the acts of his administration will furnish the best illustration of his devotion to those great principles we have previously enumerated as the basis of Democracy.

#### THE EMBARRASMENTS HE HAD TO ENCOUNTER.

Notwithstanding the eminent skill with which our foreign affairs were managed by Gen. Jackson, throughout his administration, great embarrassments remained to be encountered by his successor. Having succeeded in obtaining indemnity from European powers for a long arrears of injuries we had suffered during the sanguinary conflicts succeeded the American Revolution, he turned, towards the close of his second term, his attention to the just demands of our citizens against the Republics of this continent. Beginning with Mexico, he pressed upon her, with his wonted energy and firmness, the prompt arrangement of our claims, daily increasing in numbers, and some of them having their origin in those first and early movements in the Spanish American States, which resulted in their complete emancipation and independence. Although partially supported by Congress, they did not see fit to sustain him in the recommendation made, at a critical moment, to enforce, competent means, an immediate adjustment upon the dilatory rulers who governed Mexico in rapid succession. The discussions between the two countries became more recriminatory and acrimonious; and at last, at the moment of his departure from the head of the Government, the recognition of the independence of Texas, added to the previous interruption of diplomatic intercourse, had produced a feeling on the part of the Government and people of Mexico so embittered, as seemingly to render hostilities almost inevitable. In the midst of these difficulties, attended, as they were, by the wide spread domestic embarrassments which a disordered currency had produced, the disturbances in Canada occurred, to awaken the attention of our people, and try the firmness of the Executive. A civil war raged in a neighboring country; the population on each side of the boundary was dangerously excited; angry collisions, constantly anticipated, and more than once occurring, were readily imputed to a want of good faith, or settled purposes of hostility; and a rare union of prudence and firmness, forbearance and resolution, was required to prevent those consequences which, in every aspect, threatened a fierce and prolonged war. While yet this storm of passions on the Northern frontier remained unsubsided, the occurrences on the boundary of Maine suddenly arose, and seemed to render the policy of the Administration still more difficult, and to destroy every hope of preserving unbroken tranquility. Let the history of the dangers thus springing up from the moment Mr. Van Buren entered upon the Executive office—the measures which, for three years, he adopted in regard to them—the able correspondence in which he has maintained, with unflinching firmness, the rights and honor of the United States—let these speak the merit of his administration of our foreign affairs. The wearied patience of the honest claimants against Mexico is at length rewarded, by the appointment of a just tribunal for the settlement of their claims, and a stipulated mode of paying them. The Canadian border is once more the scene of active and peaceful industry; passion has been subdued by reason and reflection; and every thing assures us, that however strong our sympathies may be with the progress of social and political improvement, they will not be indulged at the expense of international rights. Maine, whose long suffering patience properly demanded the prompt decision of the pending question, reposes with confidence in the General Administration to obtain that end, and feels satisfied that it will sustain, with unchanging resolution, her territorial claims.

#### THE PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN HIM.

Who of the opponents of Mr. Van Buren, will venture to assert that, in producing these remarkable results, he has for one moment forgotten the rights or interests of his country; that its good faith has been in the slightest particular impaired; or that a breath of suspicion has obscured its honor? In all his proceedings, amid the varying aspects of these threatening incidents, there has been a uniformity and consistency of sentiment, certainly without a parallel in the history of our political parties. Under no administration—that of Washington himself not excepted—has there been so general an approbation expressed, both at home and abroad, of the manner in which our foreign relations have been conducted. The legislative leaders of our political opponents have given their sanction in the most imposing of all forms, to the wisdom, patriotism and honor by which it has been distinguished. At most without discussion or dissent from any quarter, the Legislature entrusted to his direction the power of peace and war; the purse and the sword were deliberately placed in his hands by those who have been, and yet occasionally are, accusing him of a desire unconstitutionally to snatch them from Legislative control. In the recklessness and injustice of their party struggles, they assail the character and impeach the motives of Mr. Van Buren; in the hour of peril, when the truth must control, they evince an unbounded confidence equally in his wisdom and his integrity. How that confidence has been justified let the event declare. Not a farthing of the appropriated treasure has been expended; not an atom of the power so lavishly granted has been wielded; without resort to either, all the brilliant results to which we have alluded have been successfully attained.

Nor let us forget that while these great and absorbing questions of foreign policy were depending, all the other duties connected with our foreign intercourse were successfully performed. Indemnities have been obtained by Mr. Van Buren from Mexico, Texas, Great Britain, and Holland; advantageous commercial treaties have been completed with the Peru Bolivian Confederation, and with Holland, Greece, and Sardinia; and have been agreed upon with Ecuador and Belgium; and our national character, and the principles of maritime law, which we have always maintained, have been recognised and respected by France in her recent contest with Mexico, and in that which she yet maintains with the Argentine Republic.

#### THE EVILS OF A REDUNDANT PAPER CURRENCY.

At the commencement of his administration in 1837, Mr. Van Buren found the country excited by the redundancy of paper money, which had produced a mania of speculation and overtrading, and a consequent delusive show of prosperity, which had no other basis than a system of credit without bounds or limitation. The U. S. Bank had, during the years 1834 and '36, thrown wide open the floodgates of expansion, and either allured or coerced the State banks to follow its example under pretence of administering to the immediate prosperity of the country, it scattered the seeds of future embarrassment and ruin. The country suddenly became bloated with an unwholesome and sickly expansion, and all men not infected with the madness of the times predicted that this unnatural growth was but the forerunner of incurable weakness and premature decay.

The fulfilment followed closed on the heels of the predication. That invariable and imperative law of nature, which decrees that all violent excitements all overwrought efforts, whether of body or mind shall be speedily followed by sudden prostration, produced its inevitable consequences. Within less than three months from the commencement of Mr. Van Buren's administration, and before he had advised or carried into operation a single measure that could, in the slightest degree, operate to produce the catastrophe, more than seven hundred banks, as if by one impulse, violated their charter by suspending specie payments; and by that means locked up in their vaults, and withheld from public uses in a legal currency, more than twenty-seven millions of accumulated revenue, the property of the people.

The Administration, under the direction of Mr. Van Buren and in strict obedience to the laws of the land, refused to recognise the notes of these suspended institutions as legal currency, though he was menaced, in various quarters where the Federal Opposition prevailed, with coercion, violence, and bloodshed, unless he violated his oath, and followed the lead of the banks in setting the law at defiance. Fortunately for the cause of morality and justice, the permanent interests of the people, and the sanctity of the laws, Mr. Van Buren resisted these threats and disregarded these clamors, although State after State whirled around on its orbit, and deserted for the moment; the banner of Democracy. He reposed on "the sober second thought of the people," and the event justified his reliance on their intelligence and integrity.

He remained at the helm, steadily steering his course by the polar star of public faith and national honor. The result was such as ought to fill with honest exultation the bosoms of all who value these as the brightest jewels in the diadem of the sovereign people. The sacred standard of value, which is only of secondary importance to the standard of morality, and constitutes one of the great conservators of human integrity, was preserved inviolate by the Government, while every where else trodden under foot. The credit of the United States escaped the general wreck of public confidence; and the interest and principal of every debt were paid in the constitutional currency, contemplated by the fathers of the Revolution.

This state of things has ever since continued. In the midst of vast purchases of national territory, removals of whole Indian nations, an expensive war, and projects equally expensive, devised by Federal policy, to create a necessity for new loans, or indirect taxes, and at the same time, afford a pretext for a charge of extravagance against Mr. Van Buren, the specie standard has still waved over his head throughout all these vicissitudes. Not a single addition has been made to the burdens of the people, and not a single instance of a failure promptly to meet every demand, public or private, has occurred. The faith of the Government has been preserved inviolate in the midst of accumulated difficulties, and still triumphs over the reiterated efforts of a party, which is every day assailing it with unblushing calumnies and factious opposition.

#### MALIGNITY OF THE WHIG PARTY

That party, while maintaining its ascendancy in Congress, opposed every measure calculated to aid the Administration in securing the public funds, by creating new depositories, and enforcing new penalties against public defaulters. It obstinately resisted all legislation on the subject endeavored to perplex and harass the officer who presided over the fiscal affairs of the country with vexatious resolutions, *ex parte* inquiries, vindictive and groundless charges, and bitter denunciations, which had no other object but to aggravate present evils; produce additional confusion, and mitigate the pang of defeated malignity. The firm adherence of Mr. Van Buren to the obligations of integrity and the behest of the law, had forced the

great mass of the banks to resume specie payments. But experience had failed to make the most of them wise, nor had it corrected their innate, incurable propensity to sacrifice future security to present gain. They played over the same game; the same predictions of its ultimate consequences were renewed, and the same catastrophe followed. Less than two years after the first suspension, a second occurred. In both the Bank of the United States led the way—first by its influence, and secondly by its example. A few honorable exceptions mitigated the evil in some degrees; but the measure and its consequences were the same in both cases, and the people are now suffering similar evils with those that resulted from the last suspension.

#### PRESERVATION OF THE PUBLIC FUNDS, & REDUCTION OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURES.

The course of Mr. Van Buren has been the same through all these vicissitudes. The faith of the Government is still maintained inviolate. He has preserved nearly the whole of the funds of the Union from being again absorbed in irredeemable paper; and, though every additional precaution to ensure their safety, and every facility for their transmission, has been uniformly and successfully opposed by the Opposition, the public creditors have been every where paid in specie or its equivalent. The firmness of Mr. Van Buren, and the calm temperate wisdom of his measures, have thus far overcome every obstacle, and triumphed over all the efforts of an opposition, more active, more inveterate, more powerful and more unscrupulous as to means and ends, than any preceding Democratic Administration ever had to encounter.

These results, it should be recollected, were produced not only without the slightest addition to the public burdens, but during a period in which the people have been relieved from more than one hundred and seventy millions of indirect taxes, which would have been required under the tariff of 1828. This reduction is still in progress, while at the same time, Mr. Van Buren is sedulously employed in bringing about a corresponding decrease of public expenditures. Thus in 1837, the appropriations for which latter year were made before he entered upon office; in 1839, between 6 and 7 millions were subtracted from the expenditures of the preceding year; and in 1840 the estimates exhibit a reduction of between 5 and 6 millions. This simple array of facts is the best commentary on the charge of extravagance brought by the opposition against the administration of Mr. Van Buren, and just reflecting, intelligent people may now decide for themselves whether they shall outweigh unfounded statements, unprincipled calumnies, and empty declamation.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

A similar success has attended the Administration in all branches of the public service. From the reports submitted to Congress, it appears that, in the course of the last three years, great vigor and activity have been imparted to the War Department. The securities for an efficient and economical administration of the army have been increased. The Engineer corps has been rendered much more efficient; Ordnance has made great progress, and a reasonable expectation is entertained, that the results of the very extensive experiments instituted to determine the best description of cannon, and the most destructive projectiles, will shortly enable the department to adopt permanent and perfect models for the artillery.

#### THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

The expenditures of this Department during the first year of Mr. Van Buren's administration, were beyond his control. Measures had been projected, and were partly executed; and the obligations incurred by the Department, involving heavy expenditures, had to be complied with, or the faith of the Government violated. Each succeeding year has, however, brought with it a considerable reduction of expenditure. Notwithstanding the increase of the military establishment; and the heavy expense attending the execution of the Cherokee and other Indian treaties, the expenses of 1838 were reduced one million of dollars; those of 1839 nearly four millions, and a further reduction in 1840 of at least three millions is confidently anticipated.

#### THE NAVY.

Nor have the interests of the navy been neglected or forgotten. Seneb's that it is equally indispensable to the protection of commerce, and the honor of the country; that it constitutes the right arm of the nation in all offensive operations; that it is one of the main instruments for exacting satisfaction for insults and retribution for wrongs; and that under no circumstances is it likely to be perverted to the establishment of

of despotic power, Mr. Van Buren has equally given it his fostering care, and sedulous attention.

Under his administration a constant gradual increase of the materials for the construction and armament of ships, and the improvement of navy yards, to the amount of several millions in value, has occurred; the number of ships has been increased; some of those on the stocks have been brought nearer to completion; the most persevering efforts are making to revive and invigorate the discipline of the navy, and to remedy, as far as possible, that scarcity of seamen, which has become so apparent by carrying into effect a system of apprenticeship which, it is expected, will by degrees supply every deficiency. All this has been done without increasing the appropriations for the support of the naval service, notwithstanding the addition of the Exploring Expedition, whose officers and crews are paid and subsisted from the funds of the navy. On the contrary, a gradual reduction has taken place since the year 1837, amounting to nearly a million of dollars, while the accumulation of materials has increased, and the number of vessels in commission, either as receiving ships or on foreign service, is not diminished. So effectually is the commerce of the country protected in every quarter where protection is required, that we have lately seen the British admiral, with its five hundred ships, publicly reproached with the example of the United States in this particular.

#### THE IDENTITY OF THE MODERN WHIGS WITH THE ANCIENT FEDERALISTS.

Let us now contrast the picture just presented, with the opposition which the Administration so connected has encountered.

The identity of the modern Whigs & ancient Federalists is evident and undeniable. It may be distinctly traced through all their disguises. The same want of confidence in the honesty and intelligence of the people, and in those institutions which guaranty their equal rights, and the same disregard to their feelings and their interests, are always apparent, except at those periods when, despairing of success by open hostility, they attempt deception by an affected devotion to the Democracy as sudden as it is short-lived. The moment the crisis is past, whether it terminate in success or in disappointment, the mask so unwillingly assumed, and so impatiently worn, is thrown off.

If there be any essential difference between the ancient Federalists and modern Whigs, it is to be found in the absence of some of those traits in the latter, which, at the commencement of the division of parties, contributed in some degree to give character to the former. At the time those divisions originated, and during the whole period in which the Federalists maintained their ascendancy, their course was marked by a degree of decorum which gave a certain respectability to the principles they avowed. So long as a majority of the people supported their pretensions, they treated them with apparent respect, while undermining their rights by insidious legislation, in conformity to their avowed principles. But the moment the tendency of their measures was discovered and denounced by Mr. Jefferson, and they felt themselves sinking from their power, their deportment underwent so sudden and so thorough a change as to bring out, in a strong relief their double of the capacity of the people for self government.

The Federal Administration began its war against popular rights by enacting laws calculated and intended to repress & punish the free exercises of the privilege of speech, and the just complaints of the people—measures which were followed up by standing armies, to overawe them in the exercise of their suffrages. These, and other manifestations of their designs, roused the people to defence; they rose in their irresistible might, and the edifice of Federal power fell prostrate before them.

From this period, systematic political contests have been carried on between the two great parties of the country, the marked characteristics in each and all having been, confidence in the honesty and intelligence of the people, and their capacity for self-government, on the one side, and distrust on the other; a desire for an extension of the elective franchise to every free citizen of the country, on the one side, and for its abridgement, by property qualifications, and other restrictions on the other; a struggle for popular equality, on the one side, and for peculiar and monopolizing rights, corporate and private, on the other. In short, a contention for popular sovereignty, on the one side, and for a Government controlled by favored interests and privileged classes, on the other. These contests have all been brought to the polls of election, and by almost a necessary consequence, have met nearly an entire uniformity of decision there—the prevalence of the popular over the aristocratic principle.